



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust: Information for Families

Special handling requirements for oral cytotoxics and immunosuppressant medicines

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with any patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer.

This leaflet describes how oral cytotoxic and immunosuppressant medicines should be given and provides advice on how to handle these medicines safely.

This leaflet does not give specific information relating to individual medicines or describe their uses. For this information you must read the individual leaflets produced for the medicine that your child is taking. If you are concerned about anything in this leaflet, please ring one of the contact numbers below. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have more general queries or concerns.

- Keep all medicines in a safe place where children cannot reach them.
- It is important to give medicines as directed by the doctor, nurse or pharmacist and at the right time.
- If your child vomits (is sick) after taking the medicine, tell their doctor or nurse, as another dose may be required, but do NOT give another dose without advice.
- If you forget to give your child their medicine, do not give them a double dose. Do tell their doctor or nurse, but keep to their regular dose schedule
- If the doctor decides to stop treatment, return any remaining medicine to your pharmacist. Do not flush them down the toilet or throw them away.



How is the medicine given?

- Ideally the tablets or capsules should be swallowed, and then washed down with some liquid.
- Most tablets must be taken with plenty of liquid, at least a large glassful.
- Sometimes, it may be necessary to halve tablets to obtain the correct dose for your child. A tablet cutter must be used. These are available from the pharmacy department or your community pharmacy. Keep the tablet cutter for these medicines only.
- If you are cutting tablets, you should not touch them directly with your hands. You should wear a pair of household rubber gloves or use tweezers. Do not use these for any other purpose. Ideally, you should work in the kitchen with just your child present. If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant or are breast feeding it is better to avoid handling these medicines if at all possible.
- Always wash your hands after handling any oral cytotoxic or immunosuppressant medicines.
- Waste products, that is, used paper towels, vomit and dirty disposable nappies, should be placed in a double lined plastic rubbish bin. The double bag should be disposed of as for normal household waste.
- If your child cannot swallow tablets or capsules, a liquid preparation is usually available. If a liquid preparation is not available, instructions on how to give the tablets or capsules will be given in the leaflet for the individual medicine.



Accidental spillages

- If contact occurs with your skin, you must wash the area immediately, using plenty of water. If the skin is sore you should contact your GP (family doctor) for advice.
- If contact occurs with your eyes, wash immediately with plenty of water for at least ten minutes. If after this your eyes are sore you should go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A+E) department.
- If you spill these medicines on the worksurface or floor, wearing gloves, cover the spillage with kitchen paper. Wipe the area with water then clean with household cleaner and water. Used kitchen paper and other items used to clean up the spillage should be double bagged and disposed of with the household waste.
- If any of the medicine is spilt on clothing, the spill should be blotted dry with kitchen paper. Clothing should be removed immediately and washed separately from other items. Used kitchen paper should be disposed of as above.



Useful Numbers

Pharmacy Medicines Information
(Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm) 020 7829 8608
Hospital Switchboard 020 7405 9200

Compiled by the Pharmacy Department in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group.
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